

BURR OAK WOODS CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER is located one mile north of I-70 on Hwy 7, one mile west on Park Road. The Nature Center is open Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. **Area Hours: During Day Light Savings 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. During Central Day Light time 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** No pets are allowed. There is no admission fee. **Phone: 816-228-3766 TDD: 816-655-6268**

Ask a Naturalist

Do you have a fish, forest, or wildlife related question? You can write, email or call the Ask a Naturalist at Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center for an answer to your quandary and possibly have it published in the Nutshell.

Please write to:

Ask a Naturalist
Burr Oak Woods CNC
1401 NW Park Rd
Blue Springs, MO 64015

Email a naturalist:

ben.pursley@mdc.mo.gov

Call a naturalist:

816-655-6263 ext 225



The Nutshell

Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 20 March 2006 Number 03



Is Spring Here Yet?!

Ah, Spring the time of renewal and the days of splendor. When I was a younger man, my mother used to always remind me not to wish my life away. I never really understood exactly what she meant by that and might have thought to myself, of course, she was starting to get a little senile in her grand old age of 30 something. In reflection upon those days past and the fact that 30 something is not as old as I thought it was, I think I've got it.

Just the other day, one of my colleagues mentioned how she was tired of the cold, dreary days of winter and wished that Spring were here. And in a snap, I found myself uttering those words that made my spine resonate as I said them, "Be careful, don't wish your life away". Sometimes, especially for the younger generation, it's hard to be patient and wait for things in life. Winter seems so long, and Spring so far away.

Just as the sun rises and sets and the moon runs through its phases, Spring will come. How do you know when it's here? Why can't it be now? I can still hear myself asking my mother those questions not so long ago. The official first day of Spring is March 20th, but if you listen to Punxsutawney Phil (you know, that chubby little groundhog they pull from his burrow on February 2nd in Pennsylvania) Spring begins precisely six weeks from the time you wake him up, unless he sees his shadow, then it'll be a little longer (four days to be exact, Feb. 2nd plus six weeks equals March 16th add four days and you get March 20th "what a furry little genius").

Phil isn't the only one with a prediction on Spring's arrival. I used to say if you can hear the spring peepers singing, then it's Spring. My grandmother, being the mathematician in the family, would correct me by saying "Oh no! You take the date of the first time you hear Spring peepers and add it to itself then that's the first day of Spring". For example, if you hear the peepers on February 20th add twenty days to that and Spring would be here on March 12th. I can remember a few "Indian summers", as my grandmother called them, when the peepers sang in mid-February and the pond was frozen by the first of March. My grandfather would say that "Spring hasn't arrived until oak leaves were the size of a squirrel's ear". Then my grandmother would nudge him with her elbow and say, "No, that's when you plant corn". My mother was adamant that Spring was not here until the phoebe that nested on our porch returned. My father says that the true sign of Spring is when the jonquils are up. I don't know about you, but I've seen snow cover every last jonquil in the flowerbed.

To me, March is one of the most fascinating months of the year. Everything seems to happen so quickly. The arrival of Spring can vary from place to place or from person to person. This month watch for those signs of Spring. Whether it's the spring peepers, the arrival of song birds, or the size of the oak leaves, the true arrival of Spring is up to you. When my mother would say "Don't wish your life away", she really meant to say enjoy the things as they come. Don't spend your time hurrying and miss all of the wonderful things that happen as Spring approaches. If you "wish your life away," Spring will have come and gone before you know it.

Ben Pursley, Naturalist



The Nutshell

Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center
Missouri Department of Conservation
1401 NW Park Road - Blue Springs, Mo 64015

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Helping Missourians connect with nature and conserve it, too!

March Programs

PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Please call 816-228-3766 (TDD 816-655-6268)

ON OR AFTER THE FIRST OF THE MONTH

to register for the free programs listed. It is important to arrive five minutes before the program time. If you have to cancel, please call as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can attend.



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4 Saturday, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Little Acorns: Jeepers, Spring Peepers!

Ages 3 - 6

Spring is coming! Spring is coming! The Peepers are peeping and our Little Acorns will be learning all about this little frog. We will have some classroom preparation then head to a small pond to search for these critters. Come prepared to get a little muddy (or wet). Please call to register.

5 Sunday, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

The Story of York

Families (with children 10 and up)

In the Spring of 1806, Lewis & Clark and the Corps of Discovery were returning from their westward trip. Their journey was long and hard, with many tales to tell. Join us on this afternoon as we meet “York”, the slave man of Capt. Clark and hear his story of this heroic journey. Please call to register.

10 Friday,

6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Friday Night Live:

Snakes Alive!

All ages

We have ‘charming’ snakes at Burr Oak Woods! Join us as we explore the world of snakes, this will be a night you won’t soon forget! Special Guest, David Nieves will be here with his entourage of wild friends. There will be crafts and games all about these lowliest creatures. An evening of fun even for the most timid. See you then!

8 Wednesday, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

or 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Home School: Reptile Mania!

Ages 3 - 5

We will “enter” the world of snakes and discover interesting facts about how snakes “work.” Get close and personal with one of our gentle snakes. We will play the fun snake race and make a cool crafts to take home! Please call to register.

8 Wednesday

Home School: Count Down to Spring!

Ages 6 - 8 / 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. or 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Ages 9 - 11 or 12 and up / 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. or 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

We are counting down the days to Spring! Join us as we get outdoors and look for signs that spring is coming. Also, bring any questions you have about the Burr Oak Woods Conservation Science Fair we are hosting in April. Dress for the weather. Please call to register.

12 Sunday, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Missouri Conservation Frontiers:

Nature Walk

All ages

Spring is almost here! Join us for a walk down the Bethany Falls Trail as we search for signs that spring is coming. Frontiers’ members will complete the *Nature Walk* activity, while we explore nature a little closer for things that are soft, bumpy, pointed, and much more. Dress for the weather. Please call to register. **PLEASE NOTE: Meet at the Bethany Falls Trail**

14 Tuesday, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Conservation Kid’s Club:

The Inner Earth

Ages 7 - 10

Caves are dark and full of adventure. They have fascinated children and adults throughout time. The truth they tell is as incredible as the legends that have been created about them. Join the Kid’s Club as we use hands-on activities to discover this hidden world and experience a “cave” as we crawl into Burr Oak Cave! We will learn about how caves form and the wild animals that inhabit these strange and wonderful habitats. Please call to register.

**18 Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - Noon
Burr Oak Woods Hiking Adventures
Adults 20 and up**

Join us as we take a hike through George Owens Nature Park on March 18 from 9:00 am till noon. The hike should take about two hours. There are four miles of looped trails meandering through upland rock formations, deep woods, valleys and clearings. The trails are rated moderate. Check out your Natural Events Calendar for all the wildlife activity that will be taking place in the first half of March. Dress appropriately and wear comfortable shoes. (Note the name change from Adults Only Hiking Club; this program is open to all adults.) Please call to register.

18 Saturday, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

For families with the deaf and hard of hearing

Old Wives’ Tales:

Amphibians and Reptiles

Families

Come out and learn why toads won’t give you warts and why snakes are not slimy. We’ll take a look at these myths and others as we look into the world of Missouri’s amphibians and reptiles. We’ll even get to meet a few. This program will be presented in sign language. Please call to register.

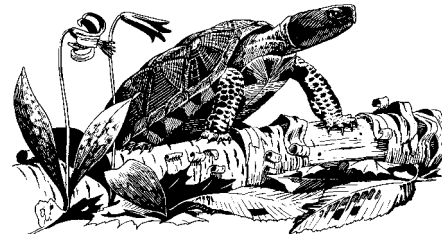
18 Saturday or

19 Sunday, 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

At the Movies

Ages 8 and up

Join us in the Nature Center at the big screen for an afternoon movie! Featured film will be the *Blooming Secrets*. No registration required.



18 Saturday, 7:00 p.m.

Deaf and hard of hearing high school students

Let’s Go Backpacking Orientation!

Ages 14 - 18

This two-day weekend backpacking adventure is designed for deaf and hard of hearing high school students. We will provide a backpack and head out to Monkey Mountain in Oak Grove on April 8 & 9. Outdoor skills, map and compass, and nature programs will be presented on this trip. Great for building self-esteem and team building skills! Interested applicants need to attend this mandatory backpacking orientation where materials and procedures will be discussed. Please call to register.

20 Monday, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Adults Only: Wild Edibles Hike

Adults only 20 and up

The wild edible’s season is finally here! Join Volunteer Naturalist Frances Mathews at the Bethany Falls shelter house as she heads out in search of delectable wild edible plants. Please call to register.

25 Saturday, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Rockin’ & Readin’ Nature Tales

Ages 2 and up

Join us for the story hour as we lead you on fantastic nature adventures! We will meet butterflies, birds, mammals, and all sorts of magnificent creatures! We will cross rivers, discover mysteries within the forest, and fly across the prairies. We are only limited by our imagination. Your child(ren) will not want to miss these stories of exploration and discovery. No registration required.

25 Saturday, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

**Babes in the Woods: Outdoor Discovery
Ages infant - 2**

Your child is never too young to enjoy what nature has to offer. During this class we will share ideas and activities to help your infant and toddler take steps down the path of outdoor discovery. Please call to register and bring a stroller.

26 Sunday, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

**Ralph Duren, The Call of the Wild
Families (with children 10 and up)**

If you enjoy “talking” to the animals and.. or..listening to them, then this is the program for you! Ralph Duren has captivated audiences for years with his uncanny knack for imitating over one hundred wild animal sounds from toads and frogs of Missouri, Midwest songbirds, migratory and native game animals to wolves, elk, moose and mountain lions. You won’t believe your ears! You’ve got to hear this for yourself. Please call to register.

30 Thursday, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Little Acorns: Jeepers, Spring Peepers!

Ages 3 - 6

Spring is coming! Spring is coming! The Peepers are peeping and our Little Acorns will be learning all about this cute little frog. We will have some classroom preparation then head to a small pond to search for these critters. Come prepared to get a little muddy (or wet). Please call to register.



Featured Item for March

**A Paddler’s
Guide to Missouri**

*recommended by
Ozark Mountain Paddlers*

Featured price \$4.⁸⁰

Regular price \$6.⁰⁰

Heritage Card Discount Does Not Apply



MARCH PROGRAMS AT LAKE CITY RANGE

**28900 E Argo Road
Grain Valley, Mo 64029
816-229-4448**

www.mdc.state.mo/areas/ranges/lakecity

We are pleased to let people know about several of the programs offered by the Missouri Department of Conservation’s Lake City Range. Be sure to call **816-229-4448** for information and to register for these programs.

2 Thursday, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Turkey Tail & Beard Mount

5 Sunday, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Basic Shotgun

6 Monday, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Reloading Shotshells-Shotgun

12 Sunday, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Basic Handgun

16 Thursday, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

How to Build a Bird House

22 Wednesday, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Beginners Youth Archery

25 Saturday, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Reloader’s Clinic/Swap Shop

26 Sunday, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Family Trap Shooting

April 8 Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Women Only: Archery

Women 18 and up

Want to get started in a new shooting sport? Designed for adults, we will cover general topics like proper stance, equipment, follow through and basic archery safety. Meet at the Lake City Shooting Range for a fun day of archery. Equipment will be provided. Please call to register.



Natural Happenings

- Wildflowers are blooming! Look for Spring Beauty, Dutchman’s Breeches, Rose Verbena and many more!
- Check your bluebird boxes and make any necessary repairs. The bluebirds are arriving and preparing for another nesting season.
- Break out the bug spray for your next nature hike, ticks are re-appearing.
- Peep, peep, peep! Spring peeper frogs are peeping out their names!
- Bats leave their hibernation caves this month.
- Many young are being born including flying squirrels, cottontail rabbits, and badgers.